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WINTER EDITION

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Escape

WINTER EDITION 1982

Issue No. 17

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Front cover: Cartoon by Tony Pigrim, Station 69.

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EDITORIAL

Well, everything comes to an end sooner or later. For me it has dawned just that little bit early. But as the saying goes, one door closes and another opens. Let's hope my particular door leads me to a brighter future, though I don't see that happening. Nothing, and I mean nothing, will ever take the place of the Fire Brigade. You make friends and enemies alike. In my early days when I had Bob Morrison's job, it seemed like I was forever up to my neck in it. True, in those days I was a bit abrasive. Some might say that I still am. But in truth, I never harboured a grudge against anyone, well not longer than 25 years.

To thank everyone who has helped me along the way, I would like to offer my thanks. To those who haven't, I would like to say "Knickers".

If I am permitted, I would like to continue with a few odd articles for the mag. You never know, somebody might read one of them one day and think they are worthy of note.

It's your Magazine, lads. You are the contributors. Your hobbies and experiences are worth jotting down and submitting, especially now when we have unlimited copy. Jokes and cartoons are still wanted most urgently.

For the last time, thanks for everyone's help, especially to Dave Bull without whose help there would be no Magazine. Now it's all down to Mike Thomason.

Cheers

T.T.

Our thanks to you Tony (77) for your dedication and enthusiasm, you have written many features for the magazine which have always been entertaining and informative, and yes we look forward to you writing many more articles for the magazine, and our very best wishes for your future. Editorial Committee.

Ode to Ed.

The escape magazine don't cost a dime,
And usually the printings fine,
But I wish to point out a minor mistake,
In the Autumn edition of Escape.

What you done was not a crime,
Like many others I'll point out in ryhme,
The problem is caused through adding up,
You probably had too much to sup.

I'll now go on to point out the error,
To make the booklet even better,
You try your best we know you're keen,
But the last two issues were numbered FIFTEEN!

Terry Burney

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

This will be my fourth Christmas in Essex and as each year goes by the financial situation both within the country and the county seems to become more and more acute. However, progress has been made within the Brigade during 1982 and it is particularly satisfying to me to see that the standard of appliances and equipment has improved, and I am certainly hopeful that this will continue into 1983.

I am also pleased that renovation work is planned or has been completed at Colchester, Grays, Tilbury and Harlow Fire Stations and that new fire stations have been built at Wethersfield and Coggeshall. In addition, I anticipate that by the time you read this article, work will have started in installing a new computerised mobilising system in Fire Control to replace the now outdated VF System A. When complete this should provide an invaluable contribution to the efficiency of the Brigade.

I am delighted to see that so many more members of the Brigade are now participating in sporting and Benevolent Fund activities. The Benevolent Fund has certainly gained considerable benefit from some really quite outstanding and imaginative fund-raising activities, and Brigade sports teams have achieved a great deal, both at County and National level. I thank all those personnel who have either organised or participated in such activities, and I look forward to an even greater participation in 1983.

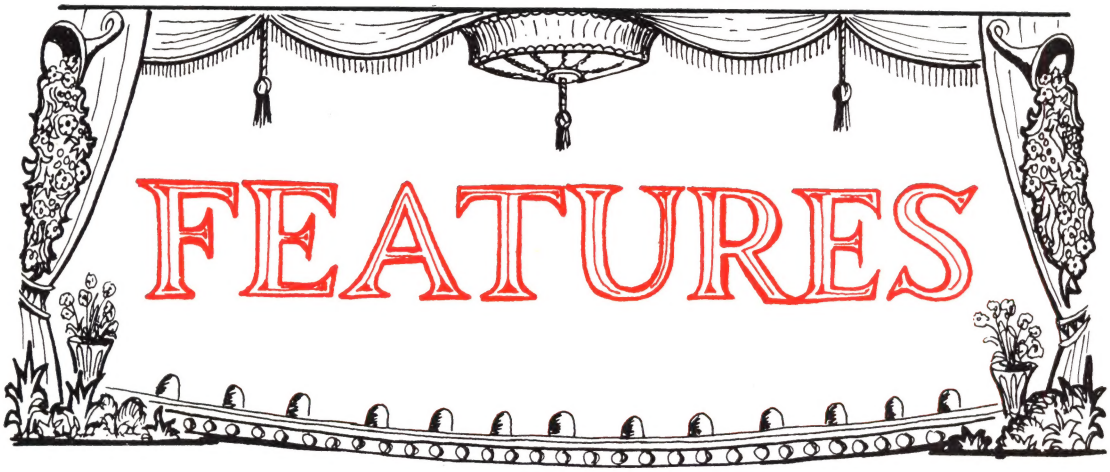
If I have an area of doubt for the future of the British Fire Service, it is that having visited a number of Continental Fire Brigades over the last two or three years, I am concerned that the British Fire Service is not accepting the responsibility for dealing with special services to the same degree as is apparent in other countries. I believe that all members of the British Fire Service should appreciate this worrying trend and actively pursue a more realistic attitude in respect of our responsibilities in this important aspect of our work.

However, the Brigade has performed operationally to its customary high standard throughout the year, and I thank all of you who have worked so hard to build on our already excellent public image. I consider that 1982 has been a good year for the Essex County Fire Brigade, and I believe that we will continue to make progress in 1983.

I wish all of you and your families a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

R. C. PARAMOR,

Chief Fire Officer



Flag Day RNLI

The next time you try to avoid the jingling cans of collectors who are receiving donations for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, take the time to reflect just how dangerous a job it really is. I had the privilege to go out with the Southend Lifeboat Crew! It was the sort of trip that made me realise that, as a sailor, I am as yellow as the skin of a banana. Southend has a volunteer crew of twenty-two souls, men who at the drop of a hat will risk their lives in seas that even on the Q.E. 2 I would think twice about chancing my arm. My crew, Bob Fosset, Dick Ireland and Roy Kidwel made me remember what it felt like when I went to my first shout in the Brigade. Their enthusiasm and dedication surprised me. At the sound of an alerter they respond to the base of Southend Pier, find out what the call is, then select a crew to do the job. They can take either the inshore boat housed just behind the boating pool or the larger sea-going boat housed at the pierhead.

The D Class Inshore Lifeboat is a single engined rubber raft that can belt along at over twenty knots, the ideal craft for rescuing the kids from their lilos or the odd diggerman from the incoming sea. From 1966 to 1981 it has had 658 launches and saved 389 lives with 52 persons assisted. That's an impressive record. Couple that with the sea-going L. 2 Atlantic Offshore Lifeboat with its twin engined solid hull, capable of over thirty knots which itself has saved 231 lives in 243 launches, you have the busiest lifeboatmen for miles.

Senior Coxswain, Bob Fosset and Dick Ireland, both serving members of the E.C.F.B., spend their off duty time waiting for their bleeper to sound. Week-ends are spent at the pierhead reading and waiting for the calls that inevitably come. Roy Kidwel, a member of Mobil Oil, made up the crew that was going to give me a taste of what it is really like. The offshore boat has to have a minimum crew of three today. There were going to be four with me making up odds. Perhaps they wanted a card school or something.

First, we got into a yellow buggy that was to take us to the pierhead. It's something special. Powered by electricity, it has runners where you can fit a stretcher onto just in case you rescue somebody that's injured. I must admit, and those at No. 69 Station can vouch for, I am not a good sailor and I had visions that I might be occupying that space for the stretcher. To be honest, I thought I was just going out for a couple of turns round the pierhead, something that I could cope with but that terrible trio had other ideas . . . . .Evidently you never waste an opportunity to practice, that's if you're a lifeboatman.

I may have guessed something was in the wind when they began instructing me in the "self-righting drill", but the look of horror on my face must have made their resolve soften towards me. Instead they dressed me up

in a survival suit. That's right, just like the helicopter pilots wear. Then on went the lifebelt, up on board and off down the ramp into the sea. I had to place my feet in stirrups to prevent me being slung off and took a hold.. ... a very firm hold. On the radio they book mobile and I heard somebody say over the airwaves that we were mad. I suppose that is quite true, for who would put to sea in a force eight. But it was too late. The throttles were opened and the boat leapt away from the pier. To say I was frightened would be an understatement. I was petrified with the speed of the thing. It was like sitting beside a driver who was stoned out of his mind and there was no way I could put the brake on. But all three knew exactly what they were doing and gradually I began to enjoy it. Flying is a term used for aircraft. Well, we did a bit from wave top to wave top. The sickening thud as the hull crashed down onto the water made every joint in my body shudder. We raced down to the S.S. Montgomery, the ammunition ship that broke up during the war. Then over towards the Mulberry Dam beached a little way from the pier. Turning into the wind, the raging sea slung the craft this way and that. The whitecapped waves spat at us till it was difficult to see. Salt filled the tear filled eyes so that it stung if you rubbed them. We quartered up a large wave to race headlong into another. The incompressability of water was driven home to me in a lesson never to be forgotten. And then, as if in answer to my own personal prayer, one of the engines packed up and Bob pulled out a set of tools and began changing a plug as if it was the most natural thing in the world. One minute we were on top of a wave, the next in the deep trough. But nobody was worried unduly, well, none of the crew members. Then in all this raging sea Bob decided to go overboard to give the crew a bit of practice in retrieving bodies. One minute you saw him, the next you didn't. Soon, thankfully, he was safe aboard and we made the slipway.

If that's the sort of men that are in the Lifeboat Service, then in future I will gladly part with a bit of cash, for believe me, they are a cut above ordinary people. They have to be. Bob's family tree goes back 104 years and there has always been a Fosset in the crew and I have no doubt that six hundred and twenty-three people that have been saved by these sorts of men are glad that they are what they are . . . . . dedicated . . . . .

TONY TURNBULL

Flag Day R.N.L.I.

BRANCH LINES

Firemen of White Watch at Loughton look on as P. Hanlan and D. Jarvis collect a certificate from the Chairman of the R.S.P.C.A., Mrs. Revington for their rescue of a cat up a tree. This type of presentation seems to be far too few these days. It is perhaps a recognition of our service to render humanitarian aid to any animal in distress.

£2,000 collected for MENCAP by the boys of Blue Watch

The lunatics of Blue Watch attached to station 69 Harlow launched themselves into a Marathon pumping exercise in aid of the Mencap charity. Positioning themselves in the local Town Centre they commenced pumping and continued for a full 48 hours. People used the damn that they pumped from for all sorts, including a man who decided to have a wash in full view of the public as they worked on.

Water was taken out of a portable damn passed through the ancient pump and thumped back from wence it came. There was some concern that money that was being chucked into the makeshift pond might foul the pump itself but luck was on their side. £2,000 in donations and a promise of more from other sources is little short of a miracle. Their sweat and labour has helped one of our more deserving charities. Fantastic effort, Fantastic watch, . . . just Fantastic.

Surprise Birthday Present for George Norris

George got the shock of his life on his fortieth birthday. At roll call that evening Dave Payne, the Guvnor, gave a short speech telling everyone just how old George is. It came as a surprise to all in attendance that he was that old. Everyone that I know thought he was a lot older . . . The present consisted of a young model from an agency seen above, complete in flimsy attire, planting a smacker on his rugged chops. It's the first time any of us has seen him lost for words. He did utter a few profanities at me in particular, but for once in my life, I was completely blameless . . .

Don't knock it till you've tried it

Within two days of the last edition of the Escape magazine being issued to the stations, I overheard a lot of comments at Basildon insinuating it was a load of old rubbish, mind you, I had the last laugh when I found one copy under the mess room table apparently ceasing it from rocking about, so it would appear the mag has its uses, never the less how about a few of the lads or even lasses of Basildon, or even "B" division, sitting down and writing a few lively or even dead lines for the Magazine.

Also on behalf of the editorial committee, I would like to thank those of you who do write regularly and keeping the magazine up to date.

Please send your thousands of letters B Division to me at station 27.

D. M .COLLINS, Red Watch.

Pete's Close Encounter of the Absurd Kind
or
A Routine Job in Tilbury

The Cast

Briggers ..... Sub. O. Brigden
Percy ..... L/Fm. Cox
Jock ..... Fm. Imrie
Burlius ..... Fm. Burley
Rigor ..... Fm. Robinson
Longshanks ..... Fm. Richardson
Porky ..... Fm. Masters
Molly ..... Fm. Maquire

Recently 29's W/T and P/E were called to an incident on the ground floor of a block of flats. On arrival the crews were amazed to see flames issuing from one of the windows, "What are they"? Porky enquired. "Them is flames boy" replied Percy (who in his 25 years service could remember seeing them once before).

Rigor (whose name is abbreviated from Rigor-mortis, which is strongly believed has set in to this character) and Porky took one door, with Longshanks and Molly taking the other which was locked. "I'll kick it in" exclaimed Molly excitedly. "No wait" said Briggers "the keyholders coming". After a short while the keyholder arrived with the wrong keys and promptly kicked the door in. This allowed Longshanks and Molly access to where Rigor and Porky were already at work. "What is it" enquired Molly "Only rubbish" came the reply "But be careful cause I've just seen a bloke walking around who is dressed up as a tart," said Rigor "/?x" off" retorted Molly assuming Rigor was pulling his leg or something, as nobody else had seen this strange phenomonem. Molly and Longshanks then left to do some work on the outside of the building.

By now a large crowd had gathered and were witnessing a full scale domestic argument going on in the first floor flat immediately above Molly and Longshanks. (This apparently is regular evening entertainment). Molly suggested that caution should be exercised as they were now working in the danger zone of the crockery now being hurled around in the fracas, and added that it was unlikely they would receive the customary 'Stand from Under' warning. The crowd were creating a football match atmosphere by cheering and booing every insult and retort issuing from the first floor window.

Once the fire situation was under control, Rigor was telling Jock about the transvestite he had seen, "Ock noo, y'werrrre prrrobably mistaken, y'balmstick, d' y' ken," said Jock disbelievingly, with a slight accent revealing his Scottish ancestry.

Briggers at this stage deployed two "Men", Porky and Burlius to check on the first floor flats as some of them had windows open. They arrived on the first floor landing where Burlius asserted his seniority and knocked on the first door. After a short pause the door eventually opened revealing a big hairy arm complete with tattoo, attached to the other end of this arm was a creature, dressed in a white trouser suit, peach coloured blouse with wire-like hair protruding from the neck-line and round its neck was a name tag. Its face, it would appear, had been made up by the local council plasterer and on top was a blonde wig.

Burlius was desperately trying to compose himself as he enquired "Is, er, everything, er, are you, er?" "Oh yes, we have no problems, you firemen are so brave, you've saved all of us," said the creature, as it stepped forward filling the doorway and gazing into Burlius's eyes. Porky by now had slid round the corner and was biting hard on a spare brick trying hard not to laff (the last work is Leicestershire for 'laugh') or wet himself at Burlius's predicament.

Burlius, now with beads of sweat on his brow, lowered the tone of his voice from castrato to baritone, stepped backwards in anticipation of a speedy departure, and reassured the creature with "All right, er 'lady', we'll check the other flats then." Burlius and Porky both sprinted for the relative safety of the external stairway where they were met by Percy "Ello boys, cup of tea going over there."

The hosts for this welcome mug of Rosy Lea, were various assortment of apprentice alcoholics in varying stages of their apprenticeship. One of them had recently returned from one of the local nightspots where he had forgotten to duck and caught a discarded beer bottle full in the face, giving him the appearance of one of Muhamed Ali's sparring partners.

One of the women present took a shine to our Rigor, saying it was his mature looks that appealed to her. "I prefer the older man," she said. At this Rigor fell off the chair he was propping up. "How old do you think he is then?" "About 35-36," she said with a toothless smile. Rigor's face drained as he revealed "I'm only 22."

It was generally decided at this stage that the best policy would be to thank the hosts and return to the sanctuary of the fire station in Civic Square.

Housing problem

A newly married couple went to look for a house in the country. Having found one they liked they decided to buy it. When they had left the house the girl asked her husband if he had seen a W.C. As he could not remember seeing one he asked the local vicar of the Parish to look over the house for them. The vicar did not recognise the term W.C. and thought that it might mean Western Church. The couple were amazed when they received his reply:

"Dear Friends,"

I regret the delay in replying to your letter, but your nearest W.C. in the Parish is seven miles from your house. This is unfortunate if you are in the habit of going regularly but you will be glad to know that a good many people go and take their lunch and make a day of it. By the way, it is made to seat 300 people and the council have decided to fit plush seats to ensure the greatest comfort. The last time my wife went, she had to stand all the time. There are special arrangements for young ladies, presided over by the Minister who will give all the help required. The children will sit together and sing during the ceremony. Hoping the above information is of use to you.

I remain yours

etc.

P.S. Hymn sheets are provided and can be found hanging behind the door."

G. BAKER
Station 19, Hawkwell

NEWS FROM 5

Down at the quiet hamlet of Dovercourt Fire Station strangely enough a lot has happened since the last Escape magazine.

Buzby Bird has passed his Station Officer's exam. Therefore, to all intents and purposes following some sweeping statements, Les Nicolls' backside should now have closed up.

Following 'B' Watch, joining in goose step, counting and hysterical screaming practice, George Patient has passed the second part of his Subs exam. It is all worked out that should one of the 'knives between the shoulder blades' finally finds Station Officer Jay, then they can both move up one rank.

In a bid to increase the argument value the station tea boat (happy mess) has been split in two. This seems to have been wonderfully successful with some fairly good discussions ensuing!

In mentioning the happy mess, whilst spending yet another early morning damping down a local tip the happy mess manager (tea boy) had just made arrangements to return to the Station for emergency feeding when some of the blokes, having smoked the sprogs fags, decided he should buy some more.

"Anybody else want anything?"

"Yes," said Lenny Stevens, "Egg, bacon, fried bread and tomatoes please." This was too good to miss. See photo.

Derek Cook made everybody's summer by saying he was going to attempt once again to drive through London on the way to his holidays. Once again the whole Watch was able to show him the quick way. This year was our biggest success . . . it took him 4½ hours!!

Intrepid world traveller Chris Bates won a spaghetti eating contest in Italy this year — 15 plates *and* spaghetti in five minutes.

The Station football team managed to hack its way through to the finals in the Weeley 5-a-side competition only to find that David Bailey had run out of film.

The whole Station is on tenterhooks waiting for the Brigade deficiency after a tremendous display of grit, determination, keenness, pride and catching the D.C. on the wrong day we managed to win the Divisional competition. We are now cleaning our leggings after every shout, and, practice making perfect, we took just four attempts to pitch the 464 extension ladder correctly. Imagine our surprise when, on finally completing our successful pitch, instead of being quite chuffed, Buzby reduced us to a tearful quivering mass with a severe drill yard reprimand. This has obviously worked because we are confident we can do this in just three attempts now (probably a Brigade record).

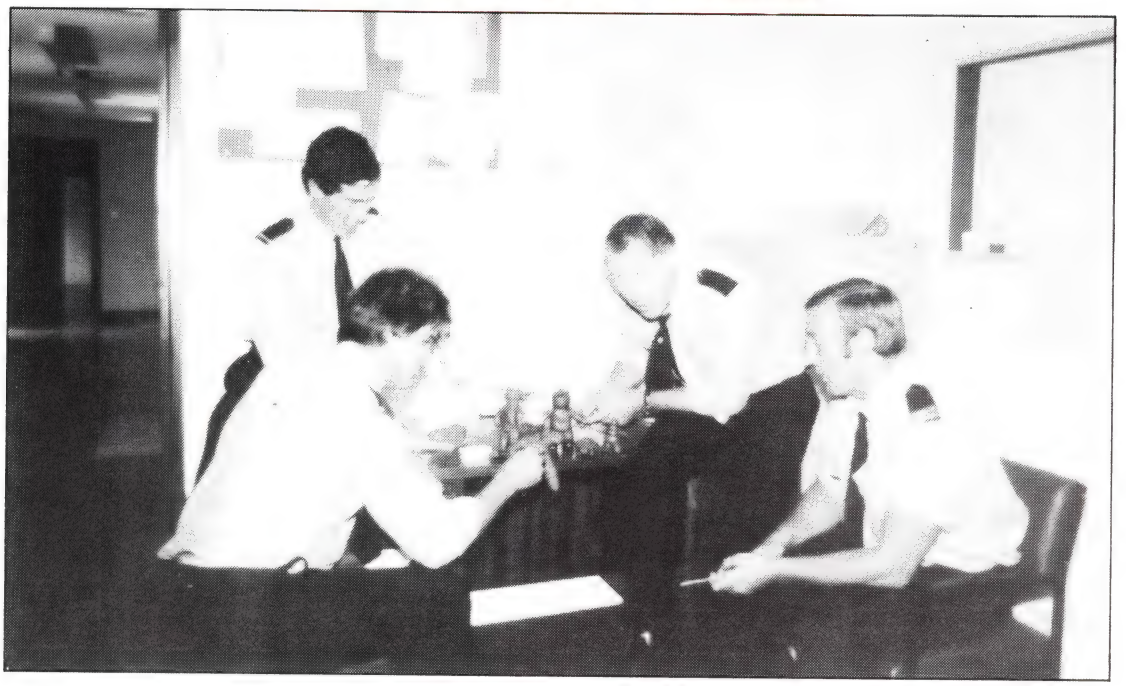
Excitement is also reaching fever pitch with the approach of the social club AGM. It gives us all a chance to tell the committee where they are going wrong. They, of course, accept our advice with great enthusiasm promising faithfully to try harder if given the chance next year.

Les Nicoll has lost three stones in weight and taken up jogging. Like every other person to achieve something of this magnitude he has become horribly boring with tales of 'how easy it was' and comments on the size of everyone else's waistlines — the main advantage being not only room at the front of the queue but enough emergency feeding to go round.

To raise money for the Ben Fund the Station held its second 'It's A Knockout' competition this summer, with teams coming from as far as Tyne and Wear and Wales.

The Social Club, thoughtful as ever, laid on extra alcoholic beverages for the weekend. Despite a determined effort before the day by the Geordies and Taffies to drink the Station dry there was still a small surplus on the day. We were saved by the arrival of Harry Tribly who was able to consume most of the excess as an aperitif to the afternoon's fun.

More words from Woodham



As reported in the autumn edition of Escape magazine by our own resident Kung Fu maniac, things at Woodham are at last in full swing and the sniping and backbiting are just like a real Fire Station, and to make it feel more like a Fire Station, Control are joining in the spirit of things and giving us at least one fire call per month (after this edition, one per year).

Now Stations have been issued with their tub of modelling clay (sealing compound). Entries are invited for the best Morph. As you can see from our photographs, Station 50 has already made a start.

Our 'lord and master', Captain Morri, who is on the design and development committee, recently tried and tested with the aid of Tom Dean the new two-man economy legging. His comments on this piece of personal equipment !! too bloody small, they should be at least two sizes *bigger*. It's painful to bend over!!

Once again the holiday period came with its usual flood of duties, and standbys now know what it is to visit a real fire station like Woodham, which brings me to the point of my crash helmet.

Would the last standby who drove my motorbike please return my helmet, as the Station Officer will only let me do 120 mph around the appliance without my helmet.

RAY CLAYTON

Research and Development Committee

Back in the dark days, June 1979 to be exact, the then brand new Chief Officer instructed that a Research and Development Committee should be implemented. The purpose of this body was to consider, review and evaluate ideas, procedures and equipment and forward recommendations to the Senior Officer's Management Team.

This was an entirely new concept for the Brigade and after the initial shock it was realised that this must be an improvement on the existing situation which, to say the least, was a trifle disorientated.

It was left to the Station Officer (Staff) to organise the first meeting and after some trepidation it was scheduled for 24 July 1979.

The first meeting produced a slight hiccup, which was soon overcome, and developed into an interesting and productive session.

Further meetings were, and still are, held at regular intervals and all members of the Committee are agreed that it has quickly developed into a worthwhile and informative section of the Brigade's organisation.

A review of the Committee's composition, purpose and results will be of interest to readers and are as follows:—

Composition

The Committee meets under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Chief Officer and comprises a Secretary (A.D.O. Staff), 2 representatives from the Fire Brigades Union, 2 representatives from the National Association of Fire Officers, the Brigade Engineer and the Principal Technical Officer. Facilities for the co-opting of specialists, for specific items, are also available to the Committee.

Terms of Reference

To consider, review and evaluate ideas submitted to the Committee; additions, reductions or changes in equipment and changes in operational procedures and submit recommendations to the Senior Officer's Management Team. Under these terms, the evaluation of equipment is carried out under the auspices of the Committee and the results of such evaluation are fully discussed before recommendations are made.

Suggestions submitted by personnel which are within the scope of the County Staff Suggestion Scheme are discussed and evaluated prior to submission to the County for a possible award.

A considerable number of items have been introduced into the Brigade following consideration by the Committee ranging from charging "Tildawn" lamps via the Genie Heater to the issue of resusciades for First Aid boxes.

Various amendments to Brigade Orders and Operational and Training Instructions have been made following suggestions considered by the Committee, not the least being the Brigade Decontamination Procedure.

Although the Research and Development Committee has been a success and the future requirements would point to the increase of items to be reviewed and discussed, it is nevertheless essential that suggestions from personnel are forthcoming and no matter how much others decry or condemn a suggestion you wish to forward, don't be deterred, send it in **I can assure you it will be considered.**

FRED THOMSON,
Secretary R & D.

The Ghost of Barn Abbey

Pete Taylor aged 52 realised as he looked at the burnt out shell of his beautiful VW caravanette there was nothing he could do, the van had caught fire while he had been away from the camping site of Barn Abbey. The friendly fire officer pushed his helmet back on his head and patted his shoulder, "Was a good vehicle" he said. Pete nodded gloomily. Other caravaners stood in silent witness watching the firemen as they cleared up and gave the smoking wreckage a final squirt from the hose reels. "We did try and save it" said one of the bystanders, "but it was useless, one minute it was just smoking the next it was a ball of flame". The man shrugged "nothing we could do" he said again.

The proprietor of the site had shown Pete an unoccupied Van parked at the rear of the caravan site "This will do you for a couple of days, that is till you get yourself sorted out. I can get your van taken to the local garage while you wait for the Insurance people to come and view it". "I'd appreciate that" said Peter, as he let himself into the bonafide caravan. Once inside he was surprised to see how plush it was. From the outside it was just an ordinary caravan but inside it was all red velvet and gold. He whistled through his teeth, then muttered a soft "Jesus". It looked even better when he turned on the light, the harsh glare from the bulbs picked out the gold contained within the pattern of the wallpaper and the furnishings. One thing did startle him and that was the signs of the zodiac that were patterned right in the middle of the carpet. Around the outside edge were easily recognisable Tarot card symbols, the most macabre being the sign of the Hangman. But it wasn't just that which made the hairs on the back of his neck bristle. Above the carpet, right in the centre of the van a ram's head glared down from the ceiling. "Jesus" he muttered again, "thank God the wife's not here, she would have been out of here like a rocket and half way to Bridgewater by now". He grinned to himself, picturing his wife running madly along the now darkened roads. The Proprietor had thoughtfully left some food on the table and because it was a dual purpose fridge there was everything in there that he should need, plus a large bottle of Aniseed. Now this particular drink was one of his very favourites for years and to suddenly be presented with the temptation to have a large swig was just too much. Without fully realising it, he was half-way through the bottle. He stopped himself just in time, a feeling of guilt enveloped him as he topped up the colourless liquid with water from the tap. "No-one will know, well not until they pour themselves one".

Suitably refreshed and with the warmth of the drink in his body, he stepped out of the van and made his way to the club house. As he walked in, it was as if everyone shared his grief at losing his VW. Drinks were piled onto him and nobody would take no for an answer. Needless to say he was very much legless when he made his way back to the borrowed van.

Once inside there was a distinct smell of rotten eggs, it invaded his nostrils so much that it made his eyes water. Opening every window and door the smell dissipated rapidly and soon he was able to sink down onto the comfortable bed only glancing at his watch momentarily. "Hmmmm, almost midnight" he closed his eyes and was asleep. After what seemed only minutes a spine tingling scream entered his fuddled brain, his eyes opened and he struggled into consciousness. The sulphurous smell was more marked than ever, although every window and door was still open. He reached for the light switch, flicking this way and that but the lights refused to go on. He was sweating visibly now, every nerve taut with both feet firmly on the floor he glanced up. The ram's head glared down at him, its eyes burning into his very soul. The Tarot and zodiac sign gave off a luminescence-glow as if they were alive. He moved forward and inadvertantly touched one with his bare foot. He yelled as it burned into his flesh. With heart in his mouth, he fought his way through the circle and out into fresh air.

Once outside he was confronted with a ring of people all dressed in their nightshirts. "Thank God you're safe" said a woman who was nearest to him. At that moment the caravan disappeared in a ball of flames. There was a muffled explosion and it disintegrated. "I, I thought I heard a scream" he stammered. "You did" said the girl "it was me, I smelt the propane while I was in bed. I could see flames flickering under the floor of your van, I honestly thought that you were a goner". "So did I" said Peter "believe me, so did I".

Again the Fire Brigade arrived and again it was the same officer. "Are you some sort of Jonah? Two vans in one evening, one motorised and one on a static site. There has got to be a third before this night's over" said the Fire Officer.

The Officer was right but this time it was a Fire Engine . . .

By TONY TURNBULL

FOND FAREWELLS

Terry O'Connell's Retirement

Sub-Officer O'Connell retired this month. There was a party held in the Key and Bar at Harlow and he was presented with two enormous Oxford dictionaries plus an inscribed axe. Everyone has told me how much they enjoyed themselves. As normal, I was too late for his speech. I suppose it's a good thing really. I know him of old and I feel sure he would have singled me out for some of his choicest remarks. It was pleasant to see some of the old faces and put up with remarks like "Hey, Tony, he looks thinner than you." Anyway, he had a great send off. The "do" was organised by Kenny Pinto who did all the donkey work and the worrying for the rest of us.

Chris Shinwell

May I take this opportunity to thank all who attended my retirement party on 15th October, 1982. It was a wonderful and memorable evening and my sincere thanks go out for the numerous cards and delightful gifts I received, the many apologies for absence due to prior engagements or being on duty. Special thanks are also due to Hazel, Jeanne and Lesley for all the hard work they put into preparing the food and organising the whole affair and to Keith with his camera.

Last, but certainly not least, are my thanks to Mr. Paramor for his presentation address and for allowing the evening to be held on E.C.F.B. premises. I'm not so sure I should thank Jenny Graham for having two typewritten sheets of my past misdeeds tucked about her person (thank God she didn't quote them all) but bless her heart — she made a grand job of it.

The evening was only slightly marred by the fact that within 20 minutes of arrival I lost my purse which to date has not been recovered. I say the word "lost" because even now I keep hoping and thinking it will turn up — and the only reason I have bothered to mention it in this address is to show my gratitude to all of those present who showed the true spirit of Essex County Fire Brigade as I know it, and donated so generously to replace the money I lost.

During the course of the evening, I was told that those standing at the back during the presentation were rather disappointed as they couldn't hear, and it was suggested that I should submit a few of the stories for publication in 'Escape' magazine. One enterprising ex-member even suggested I should get cracking on a book! Well quite frankly I haven't the training or ability to write a book, but I know that most Fire Brigade members with a few years service behind them also have a fund of numerous and sad tales to relate. Wouldn't it be a great idea if someone blessed with the gift of writing could get them all together and in print? Who knows — it could be a best seller. Anyway, in response to the suggestion and hoping it will afford a laugh or a happy memory I have written down some of my memories which will be printed in the next issue of 'Escape'.

CHRIS SHINWELL

Retirement of Sub Officer Ron Mortimer of No. 62 Station, Loughton

The Mortimers being presented with an inscribed axe by Divisional Commander Baker.

Ron retired after 30 years' service with the E.C.F.B. His fellow firemen in 'E' Division gave him an additional prize in the form of a beautiful music centre. The evening was only marred by a dark skinned gentleman who climbed a tree, refused to come down and the on-duty Watch had to be in attendance. The night was dry and clear but unfortunately he insisted in wetting them, using his own reserve water supply. But it was a night to remember. All the old faces turned up at the Station. The night was full of questions like "Allo mate, fort you died years ago . . ."

Mr. W. J. Mackenzie

Mr. Mackenzie is pictured at his farewell party at Brigade Headquarters. He joined Essex from West Yorkshire in July 1977 as A.C.O. Third Officer and transferred to Herefordshire Fire Brigade on 1st August, 1982 as Deputy Chief Officer. As former editor of 'Escape' our best wishes from the editorial committee.

Bob Wright Retirement

On the 21st August a Retirement Disco-Dinner Evening (plus Stn 20 Cabaret)was held at Simpson's Restaurant, Wickford for Sub. O. Wright.
Bob Wright who served for 42 years, holds the B.E.M. and Jubilee Medal, and will be missed by personnel throughout B Division. The presentation on behalf of Wickford Fire Station, and also the officers of the Division, were made by D. C. Jerry Beech.

Ken Lindridge 20 years loyal service

We would like to extend our thanks in writing to Ken for completing 20 years loyal service to the community, as a retained member of our brigade.

The boys at Station 18 presented Ken with a pewter figurine of a child being carried by a fireman (after rescue) mounted on a hand carved mahogany base. Depicting 20 years of service at Station 18. Ken will be retiring later this year. So now is an appropriate time to write about the man, rather than retirement.

I voice my opinions as a whole crew rather than one man when I say Ken has always been helpful to every one and anyone throughout the years that I have known him. To use the word 'gentleman' in the true sense of the word, is to sum up Ken's character.

I can openly and honestly say that I have never heard Ken argue or lose his temper with anyone, which is a rare quality to be found in anyone.

It is difficult to imagine Station 18 without Ken, but it is something which many of us have not previously thought about, but all of us will have to reflect on within the future.

Congratulations on your 20 years of loyal service Ken from the boys at Station 18.

D. P. RAYMENT

Retirement of Bob Austin, Stn 2

Bob and Betty with their presentations.

On the 27th May a large party of past and present Fire Service colleagues gathered at Stn 2 to say farewell to Bob Austin, who was retiring after 28 years service. Bob's service is probably unique in Essex, in that apart from his initial training, he spent his entire service at Colchester.

Throughout his time at Colchester, no matter what the occasion, Bob could always be relied upon to hand round the mints. Among the many presentations made to Bob, were some 96 packets of mints, I don't think we are even, but we made an effort.

From all your ex-colleagues may we wish you a long and happy retirement Bob and thank you and your wife Betty for all the help you have given Stn 2 over the years.

NICE TO
YO

Top Left: **Pauline Saltmars**
Top Right: **Jane Caldwell**
Bottom Left: **Joan Saunde**
Bottom Right: **Jane Metca**
Centre: **Maria Wilkinson** *(7*

Meet more of the fac
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Pay Section)
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Old Comrades

I have just returned from a very happy holiday with my husband spent in Essex in the Manningtree, Mistley and Harwich area and whilst I was there I came across a copy of your magazine. It certainly brought back many memories, mostly happy ones, of many years ago when I was in the National Fire Service.

Although I 'joined up' at Northampton (my home town) and my first station was Market Harborough, I eventually was transferred to Nottingham via Loughborough (where I took my first fire call and first pulled down the bells). Then there was a secret movement of N.F.S. personnel called the 'Colour Scheme' in which a great number of us, both Firemen and Firewomen, vehicles and Officers were transferred to the East Coast in expectation of some great activity or possibly an invasion, I don't know. But it was so secret we were not even able to write and tell our folks and we didn't know where we were going until the trains pulled in at Southend-on-Sea.

My first station was affectionately called 'The Waterworks' at Southend, officially it was 11A2W and we manned the watch room under the kindly care of Section Leader Burns. We lived in a house across the road and plagued the life out of Tom Barnes who had a room next to ours. On a much later visit to Southend after the War I met Tom Barnes again — he was in charge of Southend main station. Where are they all now — Tom Barnes, Alf Gregory, Bert Butcher, Val Perfect and a chap named Russell who gave me my first snooker lesson. Bill Leggett emigrated to Australia or was it New Zealand, his whole family went out, we kept contact until then but often wondered how he was.

From the Waterworks I was promoted to be a 'Mobile Instructor' and with a gang of similar instructors went round the stations in No.11 Fire Force instructing the firemen how to keep log books, record files, use switchboards, etc, etc. It was a hard slog at times believe you me but at some stations we were welcomed as a bright interval between dreary routine but they didn't really want to learn how to keep log books.

Romford, Upminster and Hornchurch. We event went to Brentwood once but it was for a conference I think, not to give any lessons. We often stayed overnight at Upminster and that was where I learnt to play 'brag' and remember one memorable night when the bells went down as we were having the best game of the session. Cards and money went one way and the firemen went the other whilst we put things straight and got the kettle on for the inevitable cuppa when they came back. O happy days.

Well, I'm a senior citizen now but still as active as I was in 1945, still working and plenty of hobbies. I should think most of the lads and girls I was with in the old N.F.S. have quietly retired now, some possibly gone up to that shining bright fire station in the sky but if this gets into the hands of any old mates of mine I would be very happy to hear from them.

Best wishes to all members of the Essex Fire Brigade. Keep up the good work.

SALLIE M. PHILLIPS (Mrs)
(Ex-Leading Firewoman Evans 818053)

Food for thought

On Monday, 27th September, I took a day off from my desk at Brigade Headquarters to spend some time in a day centre for the mentally handicapped with a view to comparing the way I spend my days with the way the Instructors who train these people spend their time.

The centre I chose was the Walter Boyce Centre on Warley Hill. The centre, named after the previous Director of Social Services for Essex is designed to provide day care for 100 mentally handicapped adults. The programme provides four main areas of training. Further Education, Pre-Work Training, Recreation and Leisure, and Social Training. Each of the foregoing are allocated according to the needs of each trainee after assessment.

The building is new and is of unique design with a pleasant and welcoming appearance. It is set in what was part of Warley Hospital grounds with a wooded area to the front.

The staff consists of manager Mrs. Pat Lawday, a Deputy Manager, three Senior Instructors, four Instructors (one of which is our ex-Divisional Commander Ron Allen) doing a job well suited to him these days. Unfortunately, on Sunday, one of the Senior Instructors was taken seriously ill, and on Monday a second Instructor went sick leaving the centre rather short of staff. To add to the problems Monday was the day set to have a major change around of art and craft section — needless to say, things weren't running quite as usual. Nevertheless, I was shown round the centre and the working of different groups explained, even demonstrated to me by Ian Woodhouse, one of the Senior Instructors.

The trainees are taught gardening, woodwork, needlework, handicraft, social education and light industrial activities. Programmes are worked out individually according to need, and suitable trainees are given pre-work experience with local firms. Leisure and recreational activities are enjoyed by all trainees in one form or another.

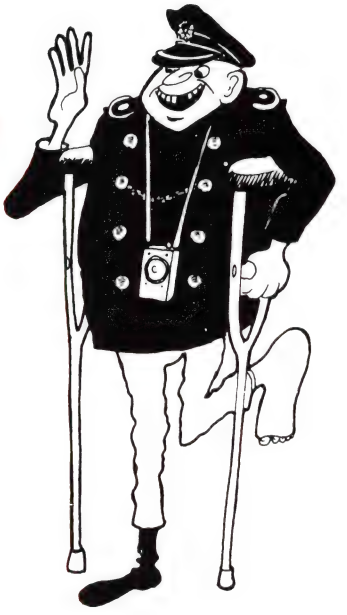
The whole unit was a hive of activity. One of the groups was doing a job of work for which the centre is paid a small amount which is used to benefit all the trainees in some way, I was invited to assist with a group of ladies doing needle craft and I thoroughly enjoyed that.

Ron's section was in turmoil as all the heavy equipment used in his woodwork section was being moved and no work could be done by trainees in that section which meant that some of the woodwork students joined other groups for the day.

I had lunch and helped in a small way in a shop which is open for the sale of sweets etc for a period during the lunch break. In the afternoon I was invited to walk round the centre talking to staff and trainees and watching what was being taught. At the end of the day I came away never having had a dull moment and wishing there was something more that I could have done to help in some way.

MARION JOHNSON
HQ Reception

BENEVOLENT



BENEVOLENT FUND

Essex is well on target to raise over £11,000 for the Fund this year.
Below are reports from three of the major events.

'C' DIVISION
Vintage Fire Engine Rally and Fete
August 29th 1982

The men of 'C' Division arranged and put on a spectacular fun day for the public on Bank Holiday Sunday. This event raised £1,800 for the Benevolent Fund and £1,800 for local charities (which will have been named by the time you read this).

The idea started as a joke last year at a Fete held at Stn 23 Leigh. One of the attractions had been an old fire engine and at the end of the day, the owner commented to the watch on the interest his machine had created. He suggested that it would be a good idea to have a rally of vintage appliances.

The watch mentioned the idea to D. C. Sewell, who gave his approval. Every member of staff in the Division supported the event and on the day the stations provided the following:

19 Stn Hawkwell - Hose rolling for children; Ride duck.

16 Stn Southend - Coconut Shy; Space Invaders; Drink Stand; Welly Hoying.

21 Stn Rochford - Teddy Bears Picnic.

22 Stn Rayleigh - Selling photographs of Vintage fire appliances.

23 Stn Leigh - Tombola; Win a day with the Fire Brigade.

24 Stn Hadleigh - Tip the lady out of bed; Auction; Fireman's Pole.

25 Stn Canvey - Stocks and wet sponges; Lucky number stand.

26 Stn Shoeburyness - Raffle; Model Railway.

48 Stn Chelmsford - Duck the Fireman.
"C" Div. H.Q. - F.P. Stand; Win a Car; Raffle BMX Bike.

15 vintage machines made up the total of 22 appliances at the event, together with numerous other side shows and practical demonstrations in the arena. Those of us who were lucky enough to be there know what a great day it was.

The Southend Mayor Mrs. Beryl Scholfield, C.F.O. Mr. Paramor and Mr. Story (Chairman of the F.P.P.C.) were our V.I.P.s during the day. Other guests included the Southend Carnival Queen and Court, the Classic Cinemas Queen and Court, the Southend Pearly King and Queen (recently promoted from Pearly Prince and Princess).

Those of us behind the stalls and side shows know how much the Mayor enjoyed herself, even to the point of cheating at the "duck the fireman" when she failed to hit the bullseye. A gentle push of the button sent A.D.O. Lilliot plunging into 2,500 gals of water. (Our thanks to Stn 48 and D.C. Davey for their support).

Our thanks also to Mike Kay (Commentator) and B.A.F. for their P.A. system and prizes so generously donated. The W.R.V.S. Canvey Army Cadets, local Scout groups and Guide companies, the Traders of Southend and districts for the generous donations of prizes etc. and of course the public for their tremendous support.

The number of people who attended the Rally will never be known exactly, but 12,000 programmes were sold and children came in free, so your guess is as good as mine.

Thank you again all who helped in any way with this event. We hope to see you again some day.

As yet we have still not received the full report from Ron Davies but the above photo sent by Bob Richardson may explain why. However, we do know that it was a very successful weekend with a magnificent sum of £21,701 being pledged. D.C. Davies assures me that a full report and pictures will appear in the next edition.

It's A Knockout 82

TEAM	CHARITY	
Vacuumatic	R.N.L.I. Harwich	£80
Navyard Wharf	Luney Club Harwich	£80
Cinder City C.B. Breakers	Blind Dovercourt	£80
Autocare	Jacques Hall Amenities Fund	£80
Sealink	Ark Achilles Club	£80
Norprint	Shaftesbury Society	£80
Harwich School 6th Form	St. John's Ambulance Harwich	£80
Pete's Taxis	Harwich & Dovercourt Community Centre	£80
Colchester Venture Scouts	Red Cross Harwich	£80
Caravan Park	Harwich School Handicapped	£80
Harwich Police	Fellowship for Sick	£100
Harwich Karate Club	Friends of Ramsey Lodge	£150
Rugby Club	West Wing Club for Mentally Handicapped	£200
Fire Services National Benevolent Fund		£800
Harwich Referees Society		£10
	TOTAL	£2,060

(Held by Station 5)

COMPETITION POSITIONS

1. Clacton Fire Brigade
2. Rugby Club
3. Kent Fire Brigade
4. Karate Club
5. Grays Fire Brigade
6. Harlow Fire Brigade
7. Harwich Police
8. Colchester Fire Brigade
9. Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade
10. Caravan Park
11. Colchester Venture Scouts
12. Ipswich & Suffolk Fire Brigade
13. Pete's Taxis
14. London Fire Brigade
15. Wales Fire Brigade
16. Harwich School
17. Norprint
18. Sealink
19. Autocare
20. Cinder City C.B. Breakers
21. Navyard Wharf
22. Vacuumatic

Children's Corner

The Giant Alexander and the Circus

"Not forgetting, of course, those adults who also enjoy them".

Early in 1968 the firemen from Malden Fire Station went to a chimney fire at West Bowers Hall, Woodham Walter, the home of the author Frank Herrmann.

Now, Frank Herrmann was delighted with the way the Fire Brigade put out his fire and presented to the firemen a book titled "The Giant Alexander". This gesture was of course prompted by the sight of Sub Officer Cramer who stands some 2.1m high (that's about 6ft 8ins, for those who went to school a long time ago).

Introduction

Little Timmy Dew had a friend called Alexander who was a giant standing some 60ft high, that's as high as one telegraph pole standing on another. Alexander worked as an agricultural contractor in Maldon, which is a grown-up way of saying that he would help people with the work on their farms.

More adventures next issue.

It was harvest time, so soon his telephone was going non-stop as farmers rang him up to ask for help. Timmy Dew spent every day of his holidays with him. He made a note of everybody who called and worked out a time-table of what the giant had to do.

Alexander thoroughly enjoyed the harvest work, but he hated it when the farmers set their fields on fire to burn the stubble. He thought it was very dangerous, because often hedges and trees caught fire too and the countryside was a black mess afterwards.

One night he was sound asleep in his barn when he felt someone tugging at his beard. It was Timmy.

"That farm you worked on last week near Lower Frating is on fire. They've telephoned to ask if you can help."

"Golly!" said the giant, and sat up with a bump. "It must be those stubble fires."

He rushed into his clothes, put Timmy in his pocket and ran off towards Lower Frating in the moonlight.

When he arrived, one of the barns had caught fire and the roof of the house was in flames too. The fire brigade didn't have a ladder tall enough to reach the top of the roof. The farmer and his family kept dashing inside to rescue their furniture.

The giant took one hose in each hand and told everyone to stand clear. In a few moments he had the flames in the roof under control. Clouds of smoke kept blowing into his eyes until tears the size of oranges were running down his face.

Then the fire-chief said to him, "The house is all right now. Can you tackle the barn too?"

The giant turned the hoses on the barn. It was terribly hot and he had to keep jumping back to avoid the smoke and steam. But soon he put the barn fire out, too.

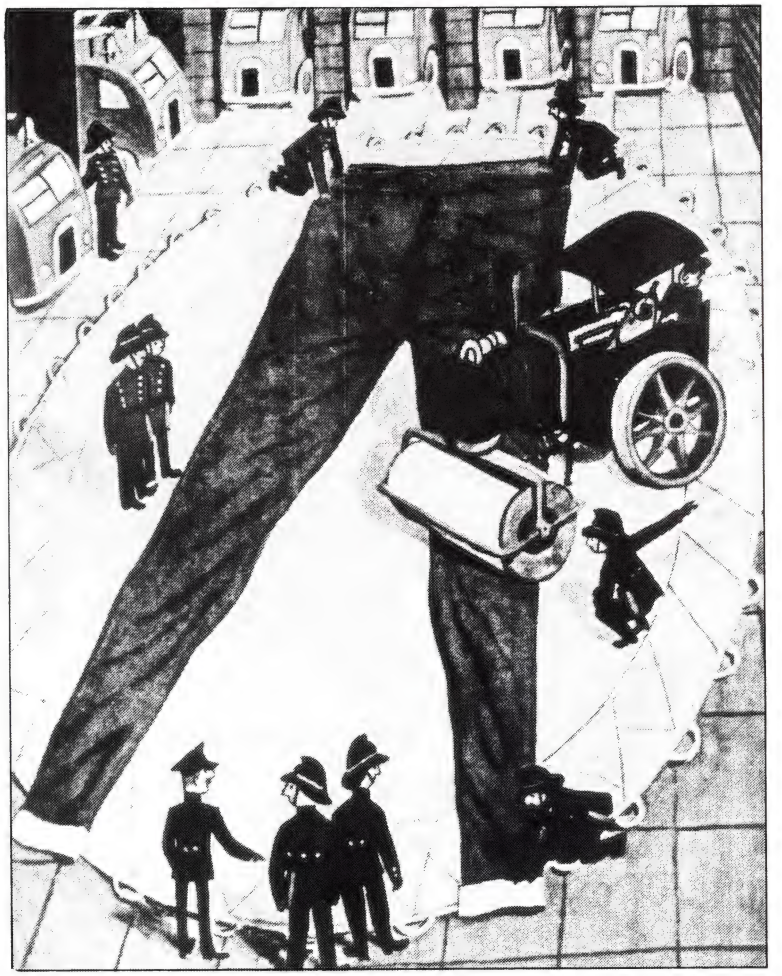
Everbody was very grateful to Alexander for coming to the rescue and wanted to shake his hand. He was a bit embarrassed when they all said, "Thank you, Giant Alexander," at once.

When he got home Mrs. Dew had made him two buckets of hot cocoa, which was exactly what he needed.

"Just look at your clothes," she said. "They're in an awful state." It was quite true. His trousers were wet and scorched. His grey jacket was black and everything smelled horribly of wet smoke.

"You'd better leave them outside until the morning," Mrs. Dew said.

The giant had a good wash and went to bed. He was very tired.



Full acknowledgements and thanks to the author Frank Herrmann and to Methuen and Company of 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4, not forgetting the picture by George Him, for allowing the reproduction of their work.

In the morning he looked over his clothes. They were a sad sight. So he put on a very old pair of trousers and a pullover with a lot of holes in it. Then he saw that some firemen had called and were packing his clothes into a large van.

The fire-chief said: "Mrs. Dew told us about them. We are going to get them cleaned and mended and pressed. It's the least we can do for you."

At fire brigade headquarters the firemen washed the clothes in a large emergency water tank with special soap to get the smoky smell out. Then they hung them up to dry. Afterwards all the firemen's wives came with their biggest needles to mend the holes.

In the meantime the firemen borrowed a steamroller. They laid out the giant's trousers on a large canvas sheet they had for catching people when they jumped out of buildings, and pressed the trousers by driving the steamroller up and down them very, very carefully.

When he got back in the evening after a hard day's work, Alexander was astonished to see a crowd of people round his barn. They were listening to a brass band: it was the Essex fire brigade band in their best uniforms. Just outside the barn door was a lorry with five large boxes on it. Sitting on top of them was Timmy Dew.

"What's up, Timmy?" asked the giant.

"Open them very carefully," Timmy said, "and you'll find out. This one first."

The giant took the lid off the first box. The band stopped playing, but he could hear music coming from *inside*. When he peeped into it, there - dancing and playing a trumpet - was Piccadilly, the circus clown.

Piccadilly jumped on to Alexander's shoulder and shouted in his ear: "The circus is up in London now. But we all read in the papers how you'd put out the fire. We thought it was wonderful. If you open the other four boxes you'll get some nice surprises."

Piccadilly knew that the giant loved surprises.

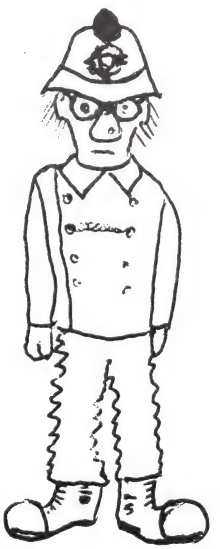
In the next box there were the giant's clothes, all neat and tidy. In the one after, Alexander found eighteen hams and twelve sacks of apples from the farm at Lower Frating. But, best of all, in the very last box was a giant clock: exactly like the one he had always wanted for his kitchen wall. It was from all his friends in the circus.

The giant was so delighted that he jumped high in the air and turned a complete somersault, landing on his hands just like the clown-acrobats. He came down with such a thump that the ground shook for miles around, and everyone thought it was a baby earthquake.

ECFB FIRE INVESTIGATION TEAM

"Can't discover the cause . . . then send for F.I.T. man."

Must be a job for A.D.O. F.I.T.



F.I.T. man springs into action

We have the technology!

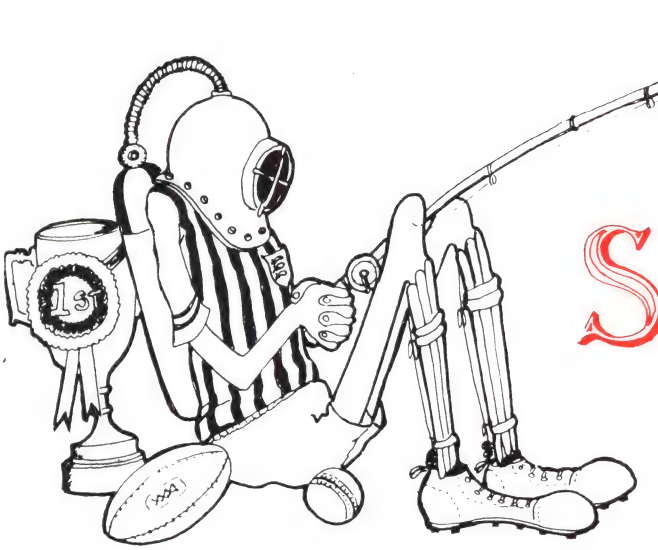
Caption Corner

From the many captions sent in the best was judged as from Dick Saunders, Station 30:

"Maureen, do you think this nail varnish goes with my station coat?"

EDITOR'S ENTRY

"Now did they tell me to turn left at the next bouy to get home or was it right?"



SPORTS

Fire Services Annual Seven-a-Side Rugby Tournament Stoke-on-Trent, Wednesday, 8th September, 1982

Two teams from the Brigade, "Phoenix" and Fireflies" entered the above event which is a knockout competition.

Teams who are defeated in the first round go into a smaller knockout competition called the Plate. There was a good attendance from Brigades all over the country and in spite of late cancellations, 32 teams played in the main event.

The Fireflies was the first Essex team to play and in the first round had a good win over West Sussex. They then had the ill fortune to meet Mid Glamorgan, last year's winners and this year's runners-up, and were knocked out. It was a case of history repeating itself as after several good wins they were beaten by Mid Glamorgan last year.

The Phoenix team met Lothian and Borders in the first round of the main competition and just lost a keen game. They therefore qualified for entry into the Plate and won good matches against Shropshire and Cheshire before going out to a good Leicester side in the semi final.

Sevens is normally a tactical open game and much of the Phoenix success was due to their secret weapon. This was a rolling maul never seen in Sevens with which they often made 40 to 50 yards before peeling off for some excellent tries.

The play and behaviour of both teams reflected credit to the Brigade, the only disappointment being that those who played were not better supported. Fireflies were a man short and a Phoenix player played two games for them before playing for his own side.

To be fair to the lads who are prepared to enter competitions such as this, I think it essential that a team should have a minimum of eight players to allow for injuries and tactical moves. Indeed the competition rules state a team will consist of seven nominated players and two reserves. Well done lads and better luck next year.

D.J.T.

P.S. — I hear on the grapevine that Phoenix have another secret weapon up their sleeves in the shape of a person who used to play the other game with the same shaped ball and are looking to humble the Fireflies at this year's games.

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Hang Gliding

Sunday, 22nd, November, 1981 — I check the weather, Dave can't come, rang Mick Painter, got him out of bed. The wind is 15.22 mph S.W. so it's Hollingbourne again. It's a fine day but we don't leave until 0945 hours, it's about a 50 mile drive so when we arrive there's already one school operating, that's Phyl Cutting of Free Flight, then Ted's got his school flying so by the time we get rigged there must be about a dozen members of our Skywing Club there, but even with this number of flyers, there is no overcrowding. Everyone takes their turn and it all works out quite well.

I have a few top to bottom flights, Mike and James have some good soaring flights on Vortex gliders. My third flight is a bit hairy, the wind has got up and this site is bumpy, I have one or two beats back and forth, Ted calls up that I'm flying too close to stall, so I pick up speed and decide I've had enough and bottom land. I get up to the top of the hill again and have something to eat, chat to a few of the club members, watch the flying, Mike Painter does a top to bottom flight.

One of the student's takes off — crashes into the top of the trees, he seems to be unhurt.

Things are freshening up now, there are four gliders in the sky soaring at various heights. Kevin has been up for 2½ hours in his Lighting, Bob's doing well on his Super Scorp, I must have some of this, but first Ted gives us a demonstration diving, soaring, landing on the side of the hill, what a flyer!! Ted lands, I check the glider over and take off joining the others in the air. I really am enjoying this, the glider does all I expect it to, I become relaxed looking round. I must have been flying for 14 minutes, I'm too high over the landing area to land, so I decide to seek more lift. Without any warning I suddenly lose height, the trees rush by and bang! I hit the ground. I feel sick, I know I've broken my right arm, there's blood in my mouth, my arm grinds, I unhook, then, two blokes come running up. One is Ted, and one is a fellow from Phyl's School, Kelvin Wilson. He takes charge, I'm dazed, I am helped out of my harness and I sit nursing my arm. Soon Mike arrives and we walk to the car where we leave for Maidstone General Hospital, West Kent, where we could not have been treated more kindly, everyone was so pleasant.

The doctor was charming. First the X-ray then a long wait during which time I was being wound up about what they do etc. Mike soon started chatting up the other patients. Finally I was sent to a cubical, undressed and put on a trolley with a gown and blanket. The anaesthetist came in and said I wasn't going to be put to sleep (trust me to have it the hard way). Well, they wheeled me in, put a tourniquet around my arm, put a funnel type thing in my hand, fixed a syringe to it and pumped in this liquid. My arms swells up red, goes numb and I feel a tremendous pressure, then the fun starts, doctor pulls my hand, the anaesthetist pulls my arm, nurse holds my other hand, they sweat without effort, I sweat with fear, then I swear.

After what seems an age the struggle ends, the plaster is on and another X-ray is taken. The doctor is pleased with his effort, the tourniquet is removed and I am wheeled back to the cubical and get home at 2300 hours. I am now grounded once again, at least 12 weeks. Monday the phone hasn't stopped ringing, good wishes, enquiries etc. Tuesday, Mike calls and we pick up my glider from James's house, looks like a new control frame again! This game is getting expensive.

As the days go by I feel as though I have been beaten up all over, neck, back, hips. It seems as though someone got hold of my forehead and jerked my head right back. I thought I had done my collar bone in too but I keep quiet about it.

How did it happen?

Conditions were ideal for soaring on this site, everyone was at it, so I took off, after five minutes I was relaxed looking around keeping into wind soaring back and forth, doing all the right things. After a further eight minutes I was in line with a hedge on the left of the landing area, too high to land and part way over the slope of the hill, so I decided to go over to the take off point to have some more, as I passed over the hollow I suddenly realised that I had lost a tremendous amount of height and was speeding over the trees. I was turned into the hill by the wind and crashed.

Because I just did not know what went wrong I phoned up Ted Salisbury and Phyl Cutting, both experienced flyers, who saw it and I set out what I think happened for the benefit of all who have got to about my stage, that is having a Pilot 1 licence for 18 months,

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recent conversion to prone, very little soaring experience. Many experienced flyers avoid Hillingbourne, apparently there are all sorts of rotors and holes in the air if you are not high enough or go to the wrong places.

I believe that I hit a severe sink and did not realise it until I was in the start of a stall, the wind turning me towards the hill, instinctively I pushed out which worsened the situation and I went in. Believe me it was so quick I did not have time to be scared or shut my eyes!

I have been told that I should have PULLED ON SPEED then turned away from the hill and landed. It's certainly given me an increased respect for the sport and I will never fail to be alert. It also made me doubt even my limited flying ability in anything but perfect conditions.

DAVE WHYMARK

Take a hike

If you and the family fancy a break, just for a couple of days or so, jump into the old jam jar and head for Craco in Yorkshire, its near Skipton.

Once you find Craco your rest will begin. Look for **Idrick House** and **Mrs. Drake**. Idrick House is one of the best guest houses I have ever stayed at, the owners are very hospitable. The house itself is an old converted church, the walls are at least three feet thick (sorry just under a metre). Just down the road is a nice ale house, well within staggering distance. During the day you can clear your head from the night before by walking or even 'forgive me for saying it Red Watch Basildon' *running* across the Dales and the Pennines.

Also worth a visit is the **Bronte Parsonage Museum**, former home of the Bronte sisters. This place held a great fascination for me and the wife and I would not consider myself a great historian. A nice walk to take is across Haworth Moor where Wuthering Heights was inspired by Charlotte Brontë.

All of the walks are clearly sign-posted and can be effortless and relaxing to roam along any of them.

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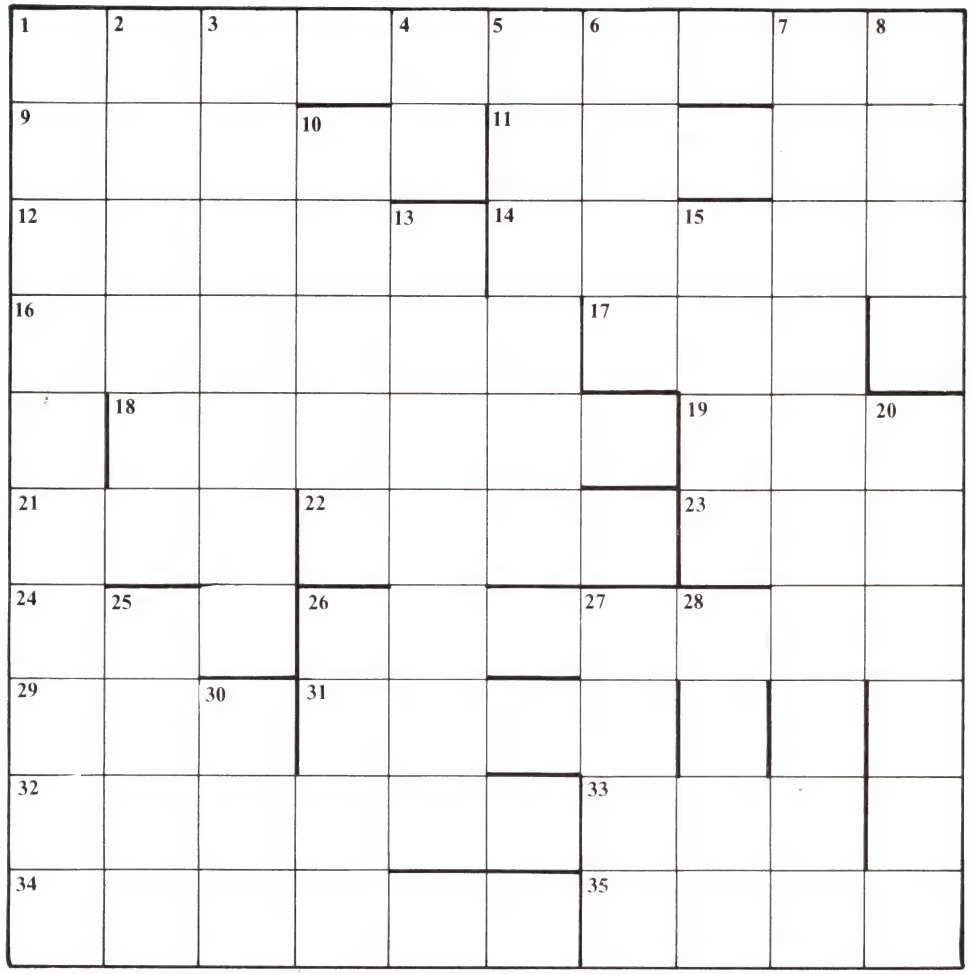

DOWN

1. Be they rigs (anagram) (6, 4)
2. A tincture — for medical reasons of course (6)
3. Cats and dogs (7)
4. Remember that game at school (2)
5. Not quite (6)
6. Home for a certain bird (4)
7. A variation of design (10)
8. Ignoble (4)
10. Dunker problems (5)
13. Electrical units (7)
15. Below 500 for a printer (4)
20. A kind of handle (4)
25. Bog myrtle and windy (4)
26. Ancient Egyptian Christian (4)
27. Alimentary canal exit (4)
28. Not anything (4)
30. Used in the search for gold (3)

ACROSS

1. Here you will find an unedible form of pasta (10)
9. Part of Sunday cuisine (5)
11. What golfers strive for (5)
12. A colloquial Manner (5)
14. Left, straight from the heart (5)
16. A plant from the Indies, used in some beer (6)
17. Where to hove to (3)
18. Trivial worry (6)
19. Transport of the first real animal protectionist (3)
21. Number (3)
22. Up and down (4)
23. A dogs best friend (3)
24. What you should go to work on (3)
26. Brown, Italian and changeable or Red, Italian and dry (7)
29. Bark — well nearly (3)
31. A sign (4)
32. Pass by (6)
33. Origin of resolution 502 (1, 1, 1)
34. Watchman (6)
35. Musical Hallucination (4)

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A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS FROM THE EDITORIAL STAFF

We thank you for all the interesting articles sent in this year and look forward to many more next year.

Winner of No. 2 Search a Word were Ann and Karen Potten, c/o Fm Potten, Stn. 53. Please contact Stn.O. Kelly, Stn. 29 for your prize.

ANSWERS

ACROSS

1. Birmingham
9. Roast
11. Eagle
12. Idiom
14. Aorta
16. Ginger
17. Lee
18. Niggle
19. Ark

DOWN

1. Bright eyes
2. Iodine
3. Raining
4. It
5. Nearly
6. Goal
7. Alteration
8. Mean
10. Soggy
13. Megohms
15. Ream
20. Knight
25. Gale
26. Copt
27. Anus
28. None
30. Pan
21. Ten
22. Yoyo
23. Man
24. Egg
25. Chianti
29. Yap
31. Omen
32. Elapse
33. U.N.O.
34. Sentry
35. Sent

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